

**Marengo River Watershed Partnership  
Project Partners Meeting  
March 9, 2010  
Ashland Town Hall, Highbridge, WI  
*Meeting Minutes***

**Meeting Attendees**

Matt Hudson	Bad River Watershed Association
Valerie Olinik-Damstra	Bad River Watershed Association
Ruth Oppedahl	University of Wisconsin Extension
Kevin Brewster	Bad River Watershed Association
Pam Roberts	Bad River Tribe
Naomi Tillison	Bad River Tribe
George Einar Bussey	Town of White River
Sharon Anthony	Northland College
Charles Ylitalo	Town of Marengo
Claire Ylitalo	Town of Marengo
Tom Fratt	Ashland County Land & Water Conservation Dept.
John Jereczek	Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
Mark Nuutinen	Town of Ashland

**Joined by phone**

Dale Higgins	US Forest Service
Tom Hollenhorst	US EPA

**Introduction**

The meeting started at 4:10pm with a welcome by Valerie Damstra of the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA). Meeting attendees went around the room and introduced themselves.

Valerie recapped briefly what the Marengo River Watershed Partnership (MRWP) is and introduced the agenda for the evening.

**Get to Know the Marengo Watershed**

Matt introduced the “Get to Know the Marengo Watershed” segment of the meeting, which BRWA intends to make a part of future MRWP meetings as a way for people to learn more about the people, land, and water of the Marengo watershed. The first “Get to Know the Marengo Watershed” presentation introduced BRWA’s new Baseline Monitoring Report for its volunteer monitoring sites in the Marengo watershed. The reports summarize the first four years of volunteer water chemistry and macroinvertebrate monitoring, along with available bacteria monitoring for each site. Three sites in the Marengo watershed were featured in the report and presentation. BRWA intends to use these reports as a communication tool to work with local governments, natural resource agencies, and citizens/volunteers to ensure that we maintain healthy watersheds.

### **Citizen Involvement Team Update and Visioning Discussion**

Valerie gave an update on work the Citizen Involvement Team (CIT) has accomplished since the December 2009 meeting. The Marengo Riffles, a newsletter devoted to the MRWP project, was created and sent to all landowners (about 1,100) in the Marengo watershed at the end of February 2010. The project newsletter included an introduction to the project, calendar of events for citizens to meet with BRWA staff to learn more about the project and submit input, a questionnaire to collect more info on how people use the watershed and what they want it to look like in the future, and articles detailing educational opportunities for landowners in the watershed. It is expected another edition of the “Riffles” will be sent in the fall.

Valerie and the CIT will be working on compiling survey input (from WDNR woodland survey, comprehensive plan surveys, Marengo Riffles questionnaire, etc.) to support discussion of incorporating citizen thoughts and values into the watershed action plan. Valerie expects to have a summary of surveys completed by the end of April to support this work. A CIT meeting will be convened in late April or early May.

Ruth Oppedahl then led meeting participants through an update of the visioning exercise from the December meeting. Ruth showed how ideas from that meeting were used to develop three draft vision statements that were presented to and discussed by the group. Ruth and BRWA will take the feedback from participants and refine the vision statement into a working draft. The vision statement will help form the basis for the Watershed Action Plan.

### **Marengo River Watershed Map and Project Ideas**

Valerie introduced a Marengo Watershed map and aerial photo that will travel with BRWA throughout the MRWP project as a way to capture project ideas from people that will be considered for the Watershed Action Plan. It has been designed so that citizens can mark their project locations on the map with a numbered sticker, and then fill out corresponding numbered index card that indicates a the project location in more detail, project description, and contact info for the person that submitted the idea, so that BRWA can contact them for further info. During a break meeting attendees studied the map and added project ideas to the map. The map will also be brought to the next partnership meeting in June for further ideas to be added.

### **Technical Team Update and Preliminary Goals Discussion**

After a short break, Matt gave an update on Technical Team activities since December. He reviewed the general EPA watershed planning steps and a more specific “journey to action” that outlined how the vision statement and exercise to develop goals are part of the process that leads us to a watershed action plan. He then led the group through a summary of the issues and concerns people described at the December meeting were focused into common themes called “challenges” and then how the challenges were used to develop preliminary goals. He led the group through a discussion of the preliminary goals. Overall the group felt that the goals did a good job of capturing the issues and concerns people had expressed, but some suggestions were given on improving a few of the words. The goals are intended to be broad enough to adapt to the probability that objectives will change as the

watershed action plan is implemented. The group also suggested that BRWA not spend too much time worrying about getting the goals perfect and also suggested looking at other available plans (such as county land and water plans, comprehensive plans, Binational Program Ecosystem Goals, etc.) and consider adopting appropriate language from those plans as a way to link this plan to others that have been developed.

Matt will take the feedback from the group and make a few more tweaks to the goals. The result will be a working draft of the goals. Matt will continue to work with the Technical Team to refine objectives underneath the goals and work with Team members on data inventory and analysis that will support identification of specific actions to be considered for the watershed action plan. It is expected that by the June meeting, the Technical Team will be able to report on mapping and other work that has been accomplished to support draft watershed action plan objectives.

The meeting concluded at 6:30pm. The next meeting of the partnership will be held on June 3, 2010, at the Grand View Town Hall. Preliminary time for the meeting will be 4-6:30pm. Matt and Valerie will send reminders and draft agenda items prior to the meeting.